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## HENRY DAVID THOREAU, FIRE LOOKOUT, by Don Scheese

For the past nine summers I have worked as a fire lookout for the U.S. Forest Service in Idaho. When not gazing at cloud formations and scanning the forest for fires, I've devoted my time to reading all of Thoreau's work, and have become fascinated with the question of how his life might have changed had he been able to man a fire tower.

It's a moot question, of course. The first official fire lookout, Bertha Hill, did not exist until 1902. (1) But the possibility is intriguing. Lawrence Buell has observed that "it was a favorite Transcendental pastime to brood over one's vocation" (2), and Thoreau brooded over his as much as any Transcendentalist. When his books failed to sell he turned eventually to surveying to generate income and also to keep him out-of-doors, only to find the occupation dissipating. By surveying future homesites and property boundaries he was, after all, contributing to the disappearance of Concord's wildness. If only he could have been paid to study the local ecology and landscape aesthetics! Having read Thoreau's *Journal*, I'm convinced he would have been quite happy as a lookout and made an excellent firewatcher. He had the appropriate temperament; he loved the mountains and solitude; and he was a "pyromantic."

The late Edward Abbey, a nature writer often compared to Thoreau and a former lookout himself, once wrote that "the technical aspects of a lookout's job can be mastered by any literate anthropoid with an IQ of not less than seventy in about two hours. It's an attitude that's difficult: Unless you have an indolent, melancholy nature, as I do, you will not be happy as an official U.S. government fire lookout." (3)

This is no exaggeration. If one can read a map and the surrounding terrain, and learn how to use a compass-like device called the Osborne Firefinder, the basic qualifications have been met. Most important is temperament; a lookout is required to scan the horizons with binoculars every twenty minutes from nine A.M. to six P.M. each day. Sounds easy, but it's not. One person's reaction to the occupation is typical: "I'd go nuts in a job like that!" But Thoreau intimated he might have been happy as a lookout when prior to moving to Walden Pond, he wrote in his journal: "But my friends ask what I will do when I get there. Will it not be enough to watch the progress of the seasons?" (4)

"How to make the getting of our living poetic!" was a question Thoreau often contemplated (2:164). He would have had a ready answer had he lived atop a mountain. Fire lookouts by

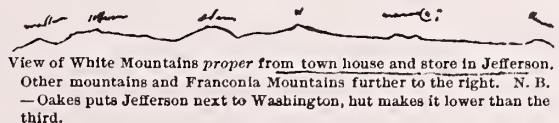
The Thoreau Society, Inc., is an informal gathering of students and admirers of Henry David Thoreau. Thomas Blanding, president; Eric Parkman Smith, Treas.; and Walter Harding, sec. Address communications to the secretary at 19 Oak St., Geneseo, N.Y. 14454. Dues: \$20; students, \$10; family, \$35; benefactor, \$100; life member, \$500. Dues should be sent to the Thoreau Society, 156 Belknap St., Concord, Mass. 01742 where the Society sponsors the Thoreau Lyceum.

design are situated on the highest peaks in a region in order that visibility be maximized. For someone who claimed "it is worth the while to see the mountains in the horizon once a day" (2:496), Thoreau's ecstasy while living in a twelve by twelve foot mountain cabin is not hard to imagine. (Incidentally, the dimensions of his home at Walden were twelve by fifteen feet. He often walked to the cliffs near Fair Haven Hill to enjoy the view and sunsets. In June 1854 he went there "to see the sun go down, to recover sanity and put myself again in relation with Nature" (6:329). A mountain home, he once punned, would be real estate (2:216). On another occasion he considered "the value of the mountains in the horizon. . . a good theme for a lecture. . . a sermon on the mount" (10:430).

One of the standard tools of a lookout is a cloud chart describing in photos and words the successive stages of a thunderstorm, from towering cumulous to lightning. Thoreau was a connoisseur of clouds. In his journal for 24 April 1857 he sketched stages 4 and 5 clouds representing virga and rainfall (5:141):



Thoreau often climbed the mountains of New England for the views and the solitude high country offers. His near-ascent of Mt. Ktaahdin in 1846 is famous, but less well-known is the fact he climbed Mt. Washington in New Hampshire twice and lesser peaks of the region many other times. After climbing in the White Mountains on one occasion, he drew a profile of the peaks to help him memorize the terrain (11:40):



View of White Mountains proper from town house and store in Jefferson. Other mountains and Franconia Mountains further to the right. N. B. — Oakes puts Jefferson next to Washington, but makes it lower than the third.

Today lookouts use panoramic photographs of the surrounding country for the same purpose.

Finally, Thoreau was a "pyromantic"—an essential qualification for anyone associated with firefighting. His nonchalant behavior

following the fire he set in the woods near Concord--climbing the cliffs to observe its progress--earned him the opprobrium of numerous townsmen. (5) Lightning-struck trees were "sacred spots" (6:28), and lightning storms "the artillery of the heavens" (6:371) and "the forked thunderbolt of the poets" (7:17). Like any good lookout Thoreau craved the sight of wildfires; he frequently reported them in his journal and once, from the cliffs, spotted five separate fires burning simultaneously (10:82).

Thoreau so often climbed Fair Haven Cliffs that it can be said the site was his lookout. On 29 May 1857 he started his ascent, only to have it rain halfway up. So he sought shelter under an overhanging rock. Suddenly lightning struck close by, and Thoreau experienced the combination of fear and exhilaration unique to firewatching. "Who knows but the lightning will strike this cliff?" he wondered. But gradually the storm passed and Thoreau, always the philosopher, pondered the significance of the event. He realized how, once he sought shelter, he looked at the scenery in a new way. "This Cliff became my house. I inhabited it" (9:387-92). So comfortable did he become that he even sang "Tom Bowling," his favorite song, while the storm raged!

For several hours, then, Thoreau was a fire lookout, an inhabitant of the mountains. Had lookouts been in existence in his time, he could have been an inspector, not of snowstorms, but thunder-storms. His lifelong quest for the suitable vocation would have been satisfied, and perhaps he might have written yet another Walden-like book--casting stones at civilization from his glass house in the clouds.

#### NOTES

1. Ray Kresek, Fire Lookouts of the Northwest (Fairfield, WA: Ye Galleon Press, 1984) 251.
2. Lawrence Buell, Literary Transcendentalism: Style and Vision in the American Renaissance (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1973) 51.
3. Edward Abbey, "Fire Lookout: Numa Ridge," The Journey Home: Some Words in Defense of the American West (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1977) 37.
4. Henry David Thoreau, The Journal of Henry David Thoreau, 14 vols (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1984) 1:299. Future references to the Journal are to this edition and will appear parenthetically in the text.
5. Walter Harding, The Days of Henry Thoreau: A Biography (New York: Dover, 1982) 160-62.

1-7-53

#### THOREAU'S USE OF BYRON IN "WALDEN", by Steven Doloff

Walter Harding identifies the source of the poem quoted by Thoreau in the second paragraph of the concluding chapter of Walden,

Direct your eye right inward, and  
you'll find  
A thousand regions in your mind  
Yet undiscovered. Travel them, and be

Expert in home-cosmography.<sup>1</sup>  
as a slightly modified version of William Habington's "To My Honoured Friend Sir Ed. P. Knight" found in Alexander Chalmers' Works of the English Poets.<sup>2</sup>

No source however, has hitherto been identified for several specific images and metaphors utilized in Thoreau's subsequent paragraph, continuing this advocacy of introspective exploration:

Nay, be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought. Every man is the lord of a realm beside which the earthly empire of the Czar is but a petty state, a hummock left by the ice...What was the meaning of that South Sea Exploring Expedition, with all its parade and expense, but an indirect recognition of the fact, that there are continents and seas in the moral world, to which every man is an isthmus or an inlet, yet unexplored by him, but that it is easier to sail many thousand miles through cold and storm and cannibals, in a government ship, with five hundred men and boys to assist one, than it is to explore the private sea, the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean of one's being alone.<sup>3</sup>

Thoreau's inspiration for a number of the elements in this passage, I believe, is to be found in stanzas 101 and 102 of Canto XIV of Byron's Don Juan.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, this use of Byron would appear to conform to a characteristic handling of material appropriated by Thoreau from two other English Romantics, Wordsworth and Coleridge. Byron's stanzas read

'Tis strange- but true' for Truth is  
always strange,  
Stranger than Fiction: if it could  
be told,  
How much would novels gain by the  
exchange!  
How differently the world would men  
behold!  
How oft would vice and virtue places  
change!  
The new world would be nothing to the  
old,  
If some Columbus of the moral seas  
Would show mankind their souls' Antipodes.  
What 'Antres vast and deserts idle' then  
Would be discovered in the human soul!  
What icebergs in the hearts of mighty men,  
With Self-love in the centre as their  
Pole!  
What Anthropophagi in nine of ten  
Of those who hold the kingdoms in  
controul!  
Were things but only call'd by their  
right name,  
Caesar himself would be ashamed of Fame.<sup>5</sup>

The parallels are evident. In addition to the common metaphor of the internal "Columbus," we find Thoreau's "seas in the moral world" to Byron's "moral seas"; Thoreau's reference to "cannibals" to Byron's reference to "Anthropophagi"; and Thoreau's representative



of worldly empire, "the Czar," to Byron's "Caesar" (the Latin root of 'czar').

More interesting, however, than the appropriation of Byron's images is Thoreau's reversal of Byron's cynical predisposition towards the undiscovered geography of the soul. Where Byron forecasts the revelation of shameful and discomforting moral vistas, Thoreau strongly implies intellectually and morally gratifying discoveries, Thoreau's happy expectations for stationary introspection arguably counterpoint a larger theme in *Don Juan* as well, the demoralizing effects of world wandering.

Thoreau in fact seems to exhibit a penchant for inverting the negative sentiments of others. It has been noted that in his letter to H.G.O. Blake of August 8, 1854, Thoreau rewrites Wordsworth's declaration "The world is too much with us" to read "I have been too much with the world"<sup>6</sup> He also reverses Wordsworth's self-pitying tone. Rather than lamenting with Wordsworth over the spiritually enervated human condition, Thoreau here stresses the volitional aspect of modern man's worldly distractions and goes on to describe his own solution to the predicament:

I got the world, as it were, by the nape of the neck and held it under in the tide of its own events, till it was drowned...Vast hollow chambers of silence stretched away on every side, and my being expanded in proportion, and filled them.<sup>7</sup>

Most well known of Thoreau's literary inversions is the quotation from the second chapter of *Walden*, placed on the title page of the original edition.

I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chaunticleer in the morning, standing on his roost,<sup>8</sup> if only to wake my neighbors up.

Here Thoreau contradicts Coleridge's "Dejection: An Ode" and the ode's implicit view of man as prey to ineluctible fits of despair.

It would thus appear in his reversal of Byron's particular characterization of the soul's uncharted reaches Thoreau is simply continuing a habit of transmuting expressions of pessimism among his English Romantic predecessors into tidings of his own brand of American optimism.

#### NOTES

1. *The Variorum Walden*, ed. Walter Harding, (1854; rpt. New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc. 1962), p.257. All subsequent quotations are from this edition.
2. (London, 1810), vol. VI, p.468.
3. *Walden*, p. 258
4. Walter Harding, in *Thoreau's Library* (Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 1957), p.38, lists a copy of an 1835 edition of *The Works of Lord Byron* (New York: George Dearborn, Publisher) bearing Thoreau's signature. The edition also contains the complete *Don Juan*.
5. *The Works of Lord Byron* (New York: George Publisher, 1835), p.606.

6. *The Correspondence of Henry David Thoreau*, eds. Walter Harding and Carl Bode (New York: New York University Press, 1958), p.330.
7. *Corres.*, p.331.
8. *Walden*, p.84.



1-7-53

#### I DISCOVER THOREAU, by Ursula Lyons

Before I even realized who Henry David Thoreau was, he was affecting my life and habits. On several occasions during my childhood my father would recall the enjoyment he had had as a youth visiting a place called Walden Pond. He told me how he would commune with nature and walk around the picturesque setting. He (my father) never re-visited Walden Pond with me but transferred his love of walking and exploring nature.

It wasn't until I was married and raising children, that I chance'd (about 12 years ago) upon a notice in an Adult Education catalog. I enrolled in a 6 week nature walk through Thoreau's favorite places in Concord. Mary McClintock was our inspiring leader who met us each week at the Thoreau Lyceum. Those walks were truly the beginning of my conscious involvement with Thoreau and his works, esp. his Journals. Moreover, all the Thoreau memorabilia at the Lyceum seemed strangely familiar, like a renewal of an old acquaintance.

Soon afterwards I joined the Thoreau Society, visited the Lyceum for browsing and lectures when time permitted, and supported the gift shop esp. at Holiday seasons. The Thoreau Society's Bulletin receives highest priority over other reading material when it arrives.

When my younger son had to choose an author and present himself as the author in an original skit in 8th grade, we visited the Lyceum and practiced saying "Simplify, etc..." Thoreau would have been proud of the skit which earned an A+ for my son! Then when it seemed too difficult to keep up my interest in Thoreau because of family and job commitments, a guest speaker of the Sudbury Historical Society rekindled my love of Thoreau and his local "haunts." He was Thomas Blanding, currently President of The Thoreau Society.

In the fall I hope to guide my Virginia sister-in-law through the Lyceum and Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, thanks to the Thoreau Society Bulletin's map (Winter, 1989).

Recently I made a discovery which increased my sense of connectedness to Thoreau.

As many already know, he changed his name from 'David Henry' to 'Henry David,' probably during his college years.

My late father had been known as 'David E' the "E" standing for Edward or so I thought. Only after seeing his birth certificate did I realize that he had been baptized 'Enrico David' or Henry David (in an English translation). He too reversed his name during his early twenties, but the fact that both men shared the same two

first names convinced me that I was destined to be included in Thoreau's ever-en-larging magnetic field of followers.



1-5-53

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In the latter part of his book, Neufeldt takes up the "success manuals" that were popular in Thoreau's day, shows that Thoreau had a number of them in his personal library, and then argues that WALDEN is basically a parody of them. While Neufeldt emphasizes some major facets of Thoreau's concerns, he unfortunately embeds his ideas in a stiff, pedantic prose.

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----- . WALKING. Cambridge, Mass., Applewood Books, 1987. Unpagged. \$5.95. A beautifully printed little pamphlet edition, excellent to use as a thank-you gift.

----- . WILD APPLES. Cambridge: Applewood, 1989. Unpagged. \$4.95. A companion to the above volume. We hope they will add more Thoreau to this fine series.

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1-5-53

HOME GROWN: THE NATIVE AMERICAN SPIRITUALITY OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU, by Stephen Alan Oakley Kenney (Abstract of Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation State University of New York; Buffalo, 1989).

By examining Thoreau's spirituality as it contrasts with the one underlying Western societies and as it compares to that animating Native American cultures, this study attempts to provide a new, holistic foundation for a broader reassessment of his life and works in the context of today's crises. Beginning with the hypothesis that the resolution of the paradox of mortal life provides the necessary faith, myths, and metaphors for human endeavors, both religious and secular, this dissertation looks first at Thoreau through his methods as a radical spiritual scholar. Then, it follows Thoreau as he resolves that central paradox in his reaction to the tragedy of his brother John's death. In turning to a sacred, gynomorphous Nature rather than to a transcendent, patriarchal Deity, he rejects both the Judeo-Christian religion of the West and its underlying spirituality, as well as the moral paradigms they provide. In the process, he rediscovered in the New England landscape the spirituality common to the multitude of American Indian cultures. His consequent morality, then celebrates the unconscious archetypes of the Feminine and the Childlike, which are highly valued in Native American societies, but which are denigrated and repressed in the West.

THE MECHANICAL THOREAU, by Mr. Thomas K. Tate

As Walden unfolds, we see Thoreau using mechanical analogies in his essays. They prove he had a detailed knowledge of certain mechanics at least, a knowledge not easily come by. This knowledge was not that of a casual observer who simply was aware that certain kinds of machines were in existence. He evidently took pains to learn about them.

In "Sounds," where he is writing about the railroad, he compares the cars making up a train to a drill-barrow: ". . . in which the cars, like a following drill-barrow, sprinkle all the restless men and floating merchandise in the country for seed." He sees people exiting from the railroad cars in dribbles along the "furrow" "ploughed" by the engine. A good analogy I would say. The drill-barrow or seed drill he is talking about was not a common device at the time Thoreau was living at Walden Pond. By this time the seed drill was just making its appearance, so for Thoreau to know enough about it to compare it with the railroad cars reveals an understanding beyond merely having seen. He could have read about seed drills because he mentions The New England Farmer and The Cultivator in "The Pond in Winter." This fact implies that he read journals if not newspapers. He must have had to go into society or the village to read them or else they came to him via the post office.

Prior to 1840, small grains like wheat, oats and rye were universally sown, or broadcast by hand. It took two and one half bushels of grain to plant an acre in this hand-sown method and often the acre yielded only ten. The seed drill was a tool that planted seed grain more efficiently and cut the cost of production.

The first seed drill patented in America was made by Moses and Samuel Pennock in Chester County, Pennsylvania, in 1841. It was used successfully in south-eastern Pennsylvania, Delaware, and parts of the State of Maryland, mainly by larger farmers. Introduced to upstate New York in 1848, the seed drill began to be manufactured at Rochester, New York, in 1849. By 1851, about the time Walden was written, there were eight drill manufacturing plants in America. These drills were described in the agriculture press.<sup>1</sup> It is very likely that Thoreau learned of them through farm journals. I doubt that he saw one in New England because they were not practical there.

Well before 1850, wheat, as a basic crop, had been taken out of production in New England. As a consequence, the seed drill or drill-barrow received no attention there. The drill cost between \$75.00 and \$100.00. The drill did not work well on the hilly, rocky fields typical of New England farms.<sup>2</sup> In his book, History of American Technology, John W. Oliver does not consider the seed drill worth mentioning until 1870, so small was its use and contribution to agriculture before then.

The mechanical insight that I find most exciting and revealing of Thoreau's obvious wide interest into such things is found in "Visitors." He talks about the inconvenience of a small house when it comes to conversation with others. "You want room for your thoughts, he writes, "to get into sailing trim and run a course or two before they make their port." That is another good analogy and he could have stopped right there. But he didn't. He felt the need, obviously, to make the point again and uses a second analogy that is technical in the extreme: "The bullet of your thought

must have overcome its lateral and ricochet motion and fallen into its last and steady course before it reaches the ear of the hearer, else it may plough out again through the side of the head." In this sentence he reveals a knowledge of ballistic science equal to the men of the twentieth century.

When he talks about a bullet overcoming its lateral and ricochet motion and the falling into its steady course, he is referring to a phenomenon of bullets in flight called "gyrostatic stability." A bullet must travel several yards leaving the muzzle for this stability to take place and overcome a certain amount of wobble. A bullet shot into a board from a gun held a short distance away, say several inches, will not penetrate the board as far as it would, had the gun been held several yards away from the board. The reason for this is the wobble, or as Thoreau calls it, "its lateral and ricochet motion." Upon leaving the gun barrel, the bullet is travelling at its maximum speed. It meets its maximum resistance to the air. This resistance causes the wobble. As the bullet travels farther from the gun, its velocity decreases and the air resistance lessens, when the bullet, to quote Thoreau, "(has) fallen into its last and steady course." For more on the properties of bullet penetration see Hatcher's Notebook.<sup>3</sup> Even into our own century there have been incorrect ideas held about the properties of bullets in flight. One such idea is that the bullet gains speed after it leaves the gun barrel.<sup>4</sup> Thoreau's description, however, is completely accurate.

Even the term "bullet" is advanced for his day. Most arms that he would have been associated with shot round musket balls, even in rifled arms. The first conical bullets appeared in England about 1826. The first reliable expansive base bullet was made in 1835. The next improvement came in 1852 with the French Minie bullet, father of the "Minnie Ball" of Civil War fame. So, Thoreau was on the cutting edge of technology when he used the bullet as a metaphor to thought.<sup>5</sup>

There is much evidence in Walden that Thoreau was a careful and accurate observer.

#### NOTES

- 1) Clarence H. Danhof, Changes in Agriculture, The Northern U.S., 1820-1870 (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 206-214
2. Clarence H. Danhof, Changes In Agriculture p. 208
3. General Julian S. Hatcher, Hatcher's Notebook (Harrisburg, 1966), pp. 406-08
4. Sir Gerald Burrard, The Identification of Firearms and Forensic Ballistics (London, 1951), pp. 75-76
5. W. W. Greener, The Gun and Its Development, 9th edition (New York, 1910) Bonanza reprint pp. 629-31



11-3-53

Illustrations are from Thoreau's JOURNAL of these dates.



A NEW THOREAU ANECDOTE by Walter Harding

New anecdotes about Thoreau continue to turn up here and there. How accurate they are there is often no way of knowing. Many of them we suspect just migrate to him, whether they had any origin in fact or truth or not, simply because he was a good anecdotal character. We found the following one recently in an unidentified clipping that apparently came from some Boston newspaper, perhaps the POST, in the late 1940s. We cannot vouch for its authenticity--in fact we pretty much doubt it. But in printing it here we are keeping in mind Thoreau's own comment about Sir Walter Raleigh, "It does not matter much whether the current stories are true or not, since they at least prove his reputation.:

STRONG MAN

Bill Callahan of Concord, who knows all about horticulture, tells one that should be included in one of the biographies of his late townsman, Henry Thoreau.

One day Henry was taking one of his fruitful walks near Lake Walden and saw a small boy weeding a vegetable patch. As he watched, the youngster grabbed a large burdock and pulled with all his might. The roots finally gave way and the youngster fell on his back with the burdock in his hands.

"Well done," said Thoreau, "you must be pretty strong to pull out such a big weed."

"Yes, sir," said the boy, "and remember the whole world was pulling on the other side."

KK

11-22-53

AUNT MARIA LOOKS AT JAPP'S BIOGRAPHY.

(Editor's note: We are indebted to the Concord Free Public Library to publish the following letter from its files (File 3A T-2) from Thoreau's Aunt Maria Thoreau to her old Concord friend Mrs. Abiel Wheeler. Page was the pen name of A.H. Japp, who published the first English biography of Thoreau in 1878.)

Bangor March 4, 1878

My dear Mrs. [Abiel] Wheeler....

Have you read the last book of Henry? published by Mr. Page who wrote the life of DeQuincy. I like it much, but still, as in all the books that have been written, with the exception of Mr. Emerson's, there are many mistakes, now Mr. Paige [sic] confounds Henry's Father with his gr father who emigrated to this country, he was a merchant, and Henry's Father was likewise, till he fail'd in business when he resorted to Pencil making and then to be told, with Henry's peculiar genius and habits, that he join'd his Father in the craft, and continued in it after his death to support the family was absurd, and Sophia I think would have smiled at the idea as we did.

M[aria] Thoreau

Letter File 3A. T-2

KK

11-3-53

RECENT DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS (Cont.)

AN UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS ORDER NUMBER ADG85-09372. 8511. AU CHANG-YAO-HSIN. IN TEMPLE UNIVERSITY (0225) PH.D. 1985, 334 PAGES. TI CHINESE INFLUENCE IN EMERSON, THOREAU, AND POUND. SO DAI V46(05). SECA, PP1270.

AB Although Chinese and Confucian influence on American literature is sporadic and tangential, its presence there has been consistent and conspicuous. Some major American authors have drawn from Chinese sources in their essentially literary endeavors. Emerson, Thoreau, and Pound are three impressive examples. This dissertation offers a general introduction of the subject, dwelling chiefly on Chinese and Confucian influence in American literary history from the mid-nineteenth century through the present.

Confucianism was a minor but not insignificant source to Emerson's system of philosophy. Emerson's belief in the goodness of man and the moral nature of the universe, his emphasis on self-cultivation, his faith in the power of character in social renovation, and his vision of the ideal scholar and poet--all these ideas, while they had their origin in American Puritanism and English and European thought, are traceable to his reading of Confucian classics as well. It is no exaggeration to state that Confucianism constitutes an integral ingredient of Emerson's philosophy.

Thoreau uses in his Walden Confucian quotations properly in the context of his book and so exhibits his perfect understanding of and agreement with the quintessential Confucian principle which these quotations reveal, namely, the Confucian emphasis on self-cultivation and self-improvement which, in the final analysis, Walden sets out to elucidate.

Pound's translation of The Book of Poetry (The Chinese Anthology Defined by Confucius), is a great success. But his obsession with his imperfect analysis of Chinese written characters made his translation of the Confucian "Four Books" a failure. Pound's Chinese translations left a palpable imprint of Chinese influence on his own poetry.

The whole Confucian ethical concept, with its emphasis on order, virtuous princely leadership, and even distribution of wealth a feature of which is slight taxation, served as the unifying theme of the Cantos. On the other hand, Confucianism may have reinforced Pound's racial prejudice and his preference for dictatorship over democracy.

The dissertation concludes with an overview of Chinese and Confucian influence in the three authors treated. (Abstract shortened with permission of author.)

KK

9-22-53

NOTES AND QUERIES . . .

The bronze plaque marking the site of Thoreau's birthplace on Virginia Road, which was originally donated by Sam Wellman, was stolen some years ago. Now, thanks to the present owners of the site, John and Margaret Rand, it has been replaced. We are deeply grateful to them and to "Geep" Phillips for donating his services in installing it. Jean Dormer, "Virginia Road Farm Site of Thoreau's Birth," CONCORD JOURNAL, Nov. 30, 1989 commemorates this event and gives a brief history of the site and of the birthplace house.

For Thoreau's funeral, his friend Elery Channing wrote a poem, "To Henry" ("Hear'st thou the sobbing breeze complain) which was sung to a hymn tune by the congregation. Can anyone tell your secretary what hymn tune was used?

The silhouette of Thoreau depicted in our Summer, 1989, BULLETIN is reported to have been sold by Bauman Rare Books of Philadelphia for \$50,000. The artist has now been identified as William J. Hubbard. A full-color reproduction of the silhouette may be found in an advertisement in the October, 1989, ANTIQUES.

R. L. Gallery (P O Box 17725, Fort Worth, Texas 76102) is offering for sale a set of the 1906 Manuscript Edition of Thoreau for \$5785. It contains as its manuscript

a draft of Thoreau's letter of June 29, 1858 to Blake.

M & S Rare Books (Weston, Mass. 02193) has for sale the "Intentions of Marriage, Concord, Mass., 1797-1834" manuscript which lists in 1812 "Mr. John Thoreau & Miss Cynthia Dunbar both of Concord. Entered April 23, 1812." Price \$600.

Walter Harding will teach an Elderhostel course on Thoreau at the State University College at Geneseo, N.Y. June 3-9, 1990.

Brad Parker of our Lyceum staff in Concord, has recently published *KEROUAC: AN INTRODUCTION* which has much to say about Thoreau's influence on the novelist. (\$10). An extensive article about Brad's work appears in the Nov. 16, 1989 *CONCORD JOURNAL*.

For those Thoreau scholars who use computers a proposal has been made to reproduce on a CD-ROM disk transcripts of major Thoreau books, manuscripts, and articles. For further information, consult Prof. Donald Ross, English Dept., Univ. of Minn., Minneapolis, MN 55455.

The Thoreau Society of Japan was established in 1965 and has about 130 members. It meets twice a year, in March and October and publishes its *BULLETIN OF THE THOREAU SOCIETY OF JAPAN* (text in Japanese). Membership is 3,000 yen (about \$22). Its president is Prof. Toshihiko, Dept. of English, College of Lit., Buddhist Univ., 96 Hananobo-cho, Murasakino, Kita-Ku, Kyoto-shi 603, Japan.

According to the *NATIONAL REVIEW* for June 30, 1989, the late Senator Warren Magnuson, famed for his malapropisms, once said, "We can't all go live at Walden Pond. Even Walden only lived there for two years."

How legends begin: Rev. Norman Vincent Peale, in the November, 1989, issue of his *PLUS*, states that Thoreau never traveled more than fifty miles from his home in Concord!

Virginia Floyd, in *EUGENE O'NEILL AT WORK* (New York: Ungar, 1981), cites several examples of O'Neill's considering making use of Thoreau in some of his plays (pp. 217, 249-50).

In St. John's Chapel in the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., there is a prayer stool dedicated to Thoreau. Needlepointed by Mrs. Richard Gambrill (Vernon Manor Park, Peapack, N.J.), it contains wings to symbolize the influence of Transcendentalism; two books and a pen to symbolize the influence of Emerson and that he edited the *DIAL*; Walden Pond, that he lived there for two years; *WALDEN*, his greatest book; bars, that he spent a night in jail; "Civil Disobedience," his treatise on the need for control of government; and trees, a squirrel, and a rabbit, to symbolize his love of nature.

A film produced at the University of South Florida by David Shever in defense of the right to burn flags opens with a quotation from "Civil Disobedience" saying, "I think we should be men first, and subjects afterward. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. . . ."

In *BOOK WORLD* for June 8, 1969, p.2, Doris Lessing, the British novelist, says, "I've always had a love affair with your Thoreau, especially *A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS*, which is so beautiful. Is Walden Pond near New York? I think I would like to visit there while I'm in America."

N.C. Wyeth, the artist, says in *THE WYETHS* (Boston: Gambit, 1971, p. 480): "I feel that my problems have only begun. Thoreau is my springhead for almost every move I can make, except in the intimate matters that transpire between a man and woman. Here he is utterly deficient, as is Christ, on account of his lack of experience. Some say that Christ had vision and did not need experience. A word from Tolstoy, Goethe, Roosevelt--derived from experience--is worth more to me, infinitely, than a chapter from Thoreau on 'love' or from Christ on sex relations. But when Thoreau talks about 'simple living' and 'high thinking,' and Christ on Faith, Hope, and Charity, then I will listen and thrill with understanding."

The entire seventh grade literature class of the Star Valley Junior High School in Thayre, Wyoming, each separately wrote letters to Concord's selectmen protesting the erection of office buildings and condos near to Walden Pond. Two of their letters are reproduced in the Nov. 30, 1989 *CONCORD JOURNAL*.

Anne McGrath, our lyceum curator, recently came across a copy of the Peter Pauper Press edition of *WALDEN* in which was inscribed the following: "The name is accented on the first syllable--Tho'reau. That is the way he pronounced it. This is on the authority of Miss Margaret M. Lothrop (Löthrop) who was a child in Concord when Thoreau's name was still green and neighbors of his were still alive. Let no one tell you it should be Thoreau." And Miss Lothrop, daughter of "Margaret Sidney of FIVE LITTLE PEPPERS" fame, was correct, of course.

9-22-53

#### THE 1990 ANNUAL MEETING

Tom Blanding announces that this year's annual meeting will be held, as usual, in Concord, this year the week-end of Saturday July 14. The program will be announced in the Spring bulletin.

The nominating committee (Ronald Hoag, chairman; Mary Pitts, and Barbara Wojtusik) presents the following slate of officers to be voted on at the July meeting: Thomas Blanding, president; Edmund Schofield, Jr., president-elect; Eric Parkman Smith, treasurer; Walter Harding, secretary--all for terms of one year--and Jane Langton and Wesley T. Mott, members of the board of directors for three years. Further nominations may be made from the floor at the annual meeting by any member.